

E - 325,351
S - 396,682

SEP 24 1972

BOOKS of the Day

Maybe the CIA
was just sneaky
and not stupid

**THE POLITICS OF HEROIN
IN SOUTHEAST ASIA**, by Al-
fred W. McCoy with Cathleen
B. Read & Leonard P. Adams
II (464 pages; Harper & Row;
\$10.95).

By H. G. Summers, Jr.

Suppose you were in the
CIA, and the President had
just declared an all-out war
on drugs. Being devious and
Machiavellian by nature, what
would be the best way to im-
plement the presidential ed-
ict?

How about taking a relative-
ly good book by a team of
young researchers, a book
that already included an at-
tack on the U.S. role in Viet-
nam which would appeal to
persons who dote on such
things, and spicing it up by
some rather innocuous and
dated attacks on the CIA. Al-
ready portrayed as the devil
incarnate by the left, a few
more attacks couldn't hurt.

Now then, how to get the
book in the public eye? What
better way than to demand
censorship rights over the
manuscript. That would raise
a guaranteed hue and cry
across the political spectrum
because nothing—thank God—is
so sacrosanct in American
society as the rights of a free
press.

Fanciful you say? Not nearly
so fanciful as half of the
sins Alfred McCoy accuses the
CIA of in his book. And look
at the results. The prepubli-
cation censorship was so weak
the publisher said that he
was "underwhelmed" by the
CIA comments that reported-
ly not a word was changed in
the manuscript. The news of
the censorship was leaked to
the press and sparked editorials
in the New York Times,
the Washington Post, and
countless other newspapers.
The Star ran an excellent arti-
cle in the Book Section of its



A brand you can trust?

Evils of CIA harassment—an
article marred only by the ac-
companying editorial cartoon
that showed the Pentagon
grabbing an author's typewriter.
But I suppose that the
Pentagon is better identified
in the public mind than Lang-
ley where the CIA really
hangs its hat.

The CIA, in effect, worked a
double blessing. It insured
high-level attention and pub-
licity on McCoy's book, which
is being faithfully reviewed by
most of the major publica-
tions, and they focus public
attention on the evils of
government censorship. The
taxpayers got their money's
worth in this CIA caper.

Let me hasten to add that I
claim no inside information on
this caper. Maybe the CIA
was just ham-handed enough
to demand pre-publication
censorship without malice of
forethought... but I'd rather
believe that our highest level
intelligence agency was
unwitting rather than believing
they were merely stupid.

If you are naturally suspi-
cious, there is other evidence
as well. According to James
Markham in the New York
Times, "a former CIA agent"
told Seymour Hersh that Mc-
Coy's assertions are "10 per
cent tendentious and 90 per
cent of the most valuable con-
tribution I can think of. He's a
very liberal kid, and he'd like
to nail the establishment. But
some leading intelligence offi-
cers inside the Government's
program think that his re-
search is great."

Not only that, but McCoy's
book, which purports to attack
the CIA, actually credits the
agency with being 10 feet tall,
of having history-bending
powers, of saving (Godfather
forgive us) the Mafia from ex-
tinction after World War II.

Disregard the "tendentious
10 per cent"—the rather puer-
ile political judgements where
McCoy wavers between con-
demning the CIA for being the
policeman of the world, and

demanding that the United
States act as the policeman of
the world in the Golden Tri-
angle in Southeast Asia (how
many divisions would it take
to subdue the Shan States in
Burma that neither the Brit-
ish nor the present Burmese
Government could police and
control?)

Disregard the sometimes ju-
venile writing style—"In 1852
King Mongkut (played by Yul
Brynner in the King and I)
bowed to British pressure."
That's like writing "At Get-
tysburg, Abraham Lincoln
(played by Raymond Massey)
said..." McCoy also notes
"a brutal Chinese pacifica-
tion campaign (in South
China) rather similar to the
one launched by the U.S.
Seventh Cavalry against the
Great Plains Indians." Why
"7th Cavalry"? All they dis-
tinguished themselves for was
getting massacred at the Lit-
tle Big Horn. It's racist of Mc-
Coy to ignore the all-black
10th Cavalry which played a
much more important role in
the pacification of the West.

Disregard all that, for the
book does give valuable in-
sights into the mechanics of
the heroin trade. McCoy's ex-
amination of the depth and
scope of the Asian opium
trade is particularly timely
since this aspect was ignored
until our own ox was gored.
When only the "heathen Chi-
nese" smoked opium, the U.S.
was singularly uninterested in
the problem.

Read McCoy's "90 per cent
valuable contribution" that
the CIA was kind enough to
bring to your attention, but do
not be misled by his conclu-
sion. It is a cop-out to say
that "in the final analysis the
American people will have to
choose between supporting
doggedly anti-Communist
governments in Southeast
Asia or getting heroin out of
their high schools." It is not
that simple.

As James Markham point-
ed out in his New York Times
review, "American addicts
need only 60 to 100 tons of
opium a year to feed their
habits... This amount of opi-
um can be grown on five to 10
square miles of arable, upland
country land—in Burma, in
India, in Turkey, in Mexico,
in Ecuador."

Even if we could stop poppies from growing, Markham reminds us, "it would not be long before underworld chemists were turning out oxycodone, hydromorphone and oxymorphone--synthetic opiates used in medical compounds which established addicts are unable to distinguish from heroin."

As the Chinese learned after almost a century of opium degradation, the answer to the problem of heroin lies within, not without, our own society. It is easy to blame others for our problems--the CIA, Southeast Asia, etc.--but sooner or later we will have to face the unpleasant truth that the only solution lies here at home.